

## ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

Described is electronic ink maintained as a software object, thereby associating ink functionality with electronic ink data. The ink may be separated into words or characters, with one object per word or character. By the associated functionality, applications that deal with embedded objects in general can automatically benefit from electronic ink, including having the object's functionality render the ink data as part the application's document. Further, because the ink data is maintained as an object, the data is automatically persisted in association with the document into which it is embedded. Ink-aware applications may call on methods of the electronic ink object to adjust formatting, search recognized ink along with text, and perform other functions. Via the electronic ink object, electronic ink substantially approaches much of the behavior normally available with text data, without requiring applications to interpret the ink data.